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'Freddy' star cheery after a Nightmare

FOR an actor who has just lost the money-spinning job which made him a star, Robert Englund was in very good spirits.

I met the man behind the ghoulish Freddy Kreuger make-up after seeing Freddy's Dead, the last episode of the Nightmare On Elm Street series currently showing at Odeon Reading and other local cinemas.

He told me: "I knew when I got the script that this was the end — but I was doing well as an actor before Freddy and I was never a die-hard horror fan."

He added: "We have used up all the ideas for these movies but this one was the most expensive of the lot because of the optical effects and the 3-D."

Although the Freddy films have had their critics in America, Robert doesn't think anyone identifies with the razor-fingered maniac or 'wants to be him'.

He said: "In England the films have always been regarded as just one element of cinema and not specially significant sociologically."

Robert said he felt rather spoiled by the six Nightmare movies because he was able to work with the same people every summer: "There was no pressure on me which is unusual in feature films."

Freddy also span off into a TV series for which Robert directed several episodes.

He is now working with Wes Craven on a screwball comedy series called Nightmare Cafe in which he plays a 'fallen angel'.

■ Nightmare star — actor Robert Englund as Freddy

He said: "I had a good body of work before the Freddy films although I was rather typed as a nerd.

"But when Freddy became a celebrity I remembered what Mel Brooks told Mark Hamill who was worried about his Star Wars popularity — 'enjoy your success and don't fight it'. Because you can't control your career."

Robert said that his most bizarre experience on the Freddy pictures was appearing as the character on a Japanese TV comedy show — "It was like Abbott And Costello Meet Freddy!"

He took time off from the Freddy films to make a new version of the Phantom Of The Opera story in Budapest — "but I did that just for the chance to work in Europe".

He added: "We were supposed to do a follow-up called Phantom Of Manhattan which had a wonderful script, but we were never able to get the use of the Toronto subway system which was essential for the story."

Robert's main regret on his brief visit to England was that he wouldn't have time to see The Wind In The Willows at the National Theatre — not the kind of show that would have interested Freddy!

Freddy Star Cheery After A Nightmare

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